

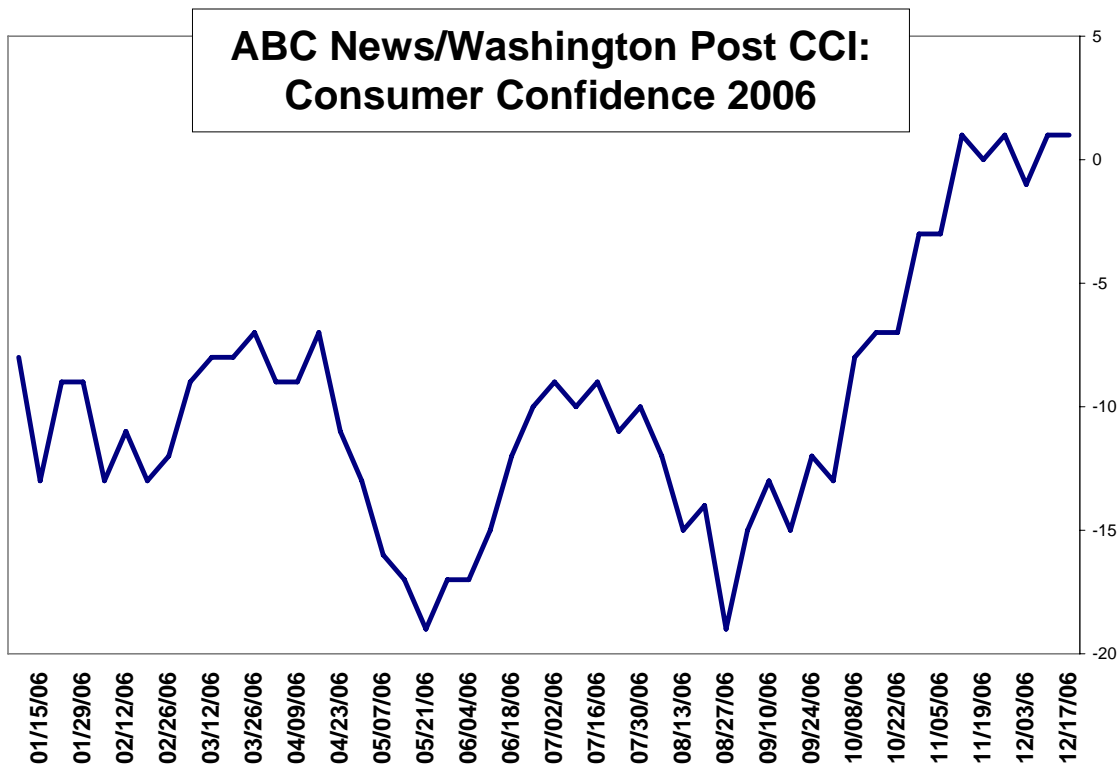
Positive Trends in CCI as 2006 Nears its Close

Americans' ratings of current economic conditions match their 2006 high and just a third think the economy's getting worse – two positive marks as the year's end looms.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at +1 this week on its scale of +100 to -100, essentially unchanged in the last month. It's come a long way since summer, soaring from -19 in August to +1 in mid-November, then stabilizing.

The CCI has averaged -10 so far this year – on track to be its best annual average since 2001, thanks in large part to its extraordinary rally the last few months.

Expectations follow a similar trend. Thirty-four percent are pessimistic about the direction of the economy, down steadily from 54 percent in August to the fewest in nearly two years.

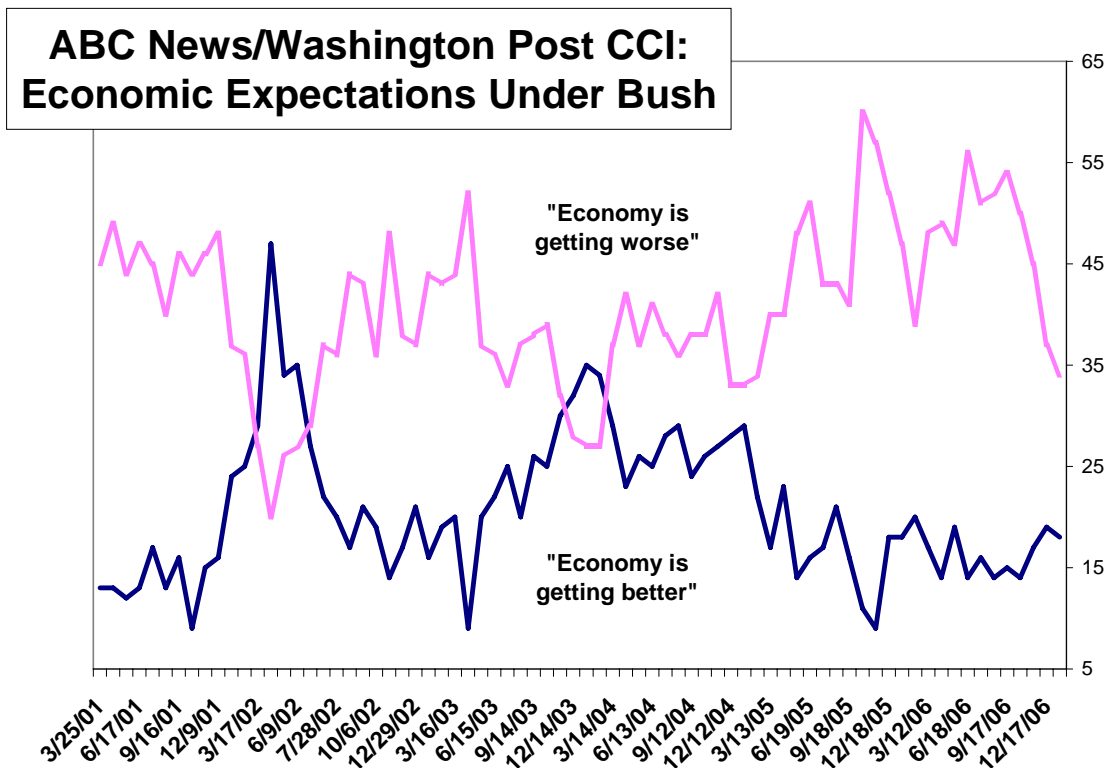


INDEX – The CCI is based on ratings of the national economy, buying climate and personal finances. This week 48 percent rate the economy positively, the most since August 2001 and eight points above its average since December 1985.

Forty-one percent call it a good time to buy things, compared with a long-term average 38 percent; and 63 percent say their own finances are in good shape, six points above average.

Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Aug. 27	2006 avg.	20-yr. avg.
National economy	48%	33	40	40
Buying climate	41	32	37	38
Personal finances	63	57	59	57
Consumer Comfort Index	+1	-19	-10	-9

DIRECTION – Separately each month the ABC/Post poll measures expectations – whether people think the economy is getting better, getting worse or holding steady. Thirty-four percent now say it's getting worse, about where it was – 37 percent – last month. But that's down from 45 percent in October and, as noted, 54 percent in August. It's now the fewest since January 2005.

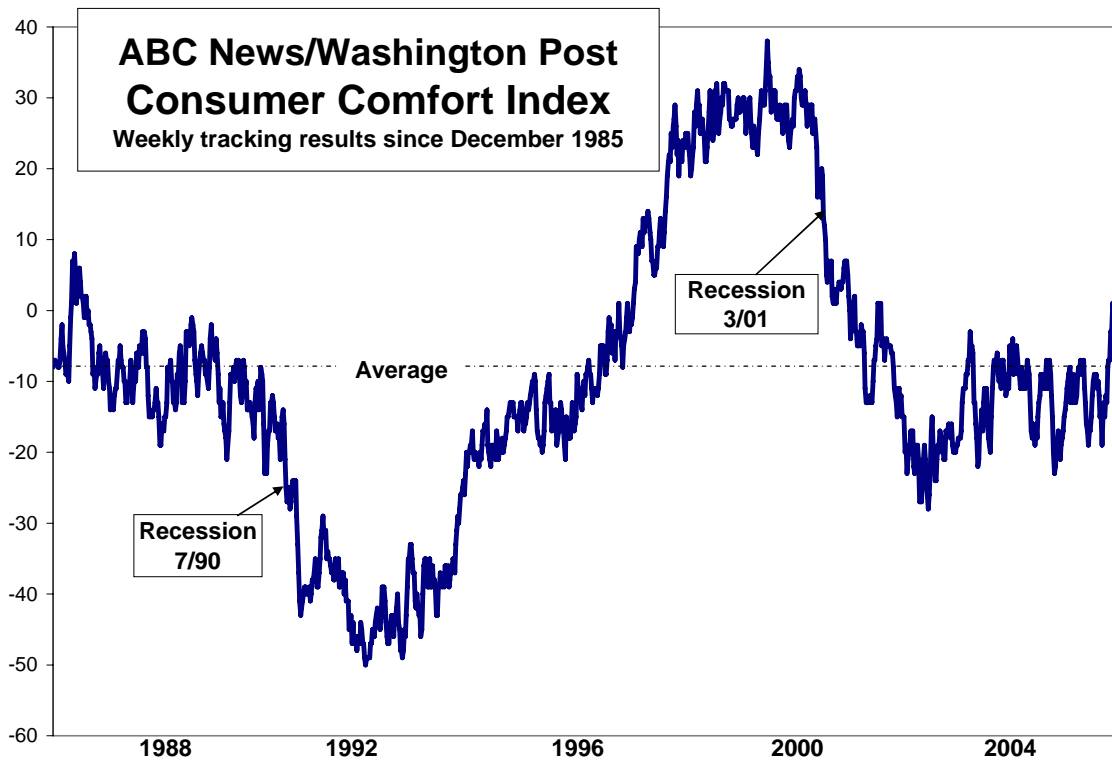


That's somewhat better than usual; 39 percent have been pessimistic on average in polls dating back 25 years. As usual, fewer, just 18 percent (about what it's been the last few months), think the economy's improving. The plurality, 46 percent, says it's holding steady.

Economy's direction			
	Better	Worse	Same
12/17	18%	34	46
11/12	19	37	42
10/15	17	45	36
9/17	14	50	35
8/13	15	54	30
1/15	20	39	38

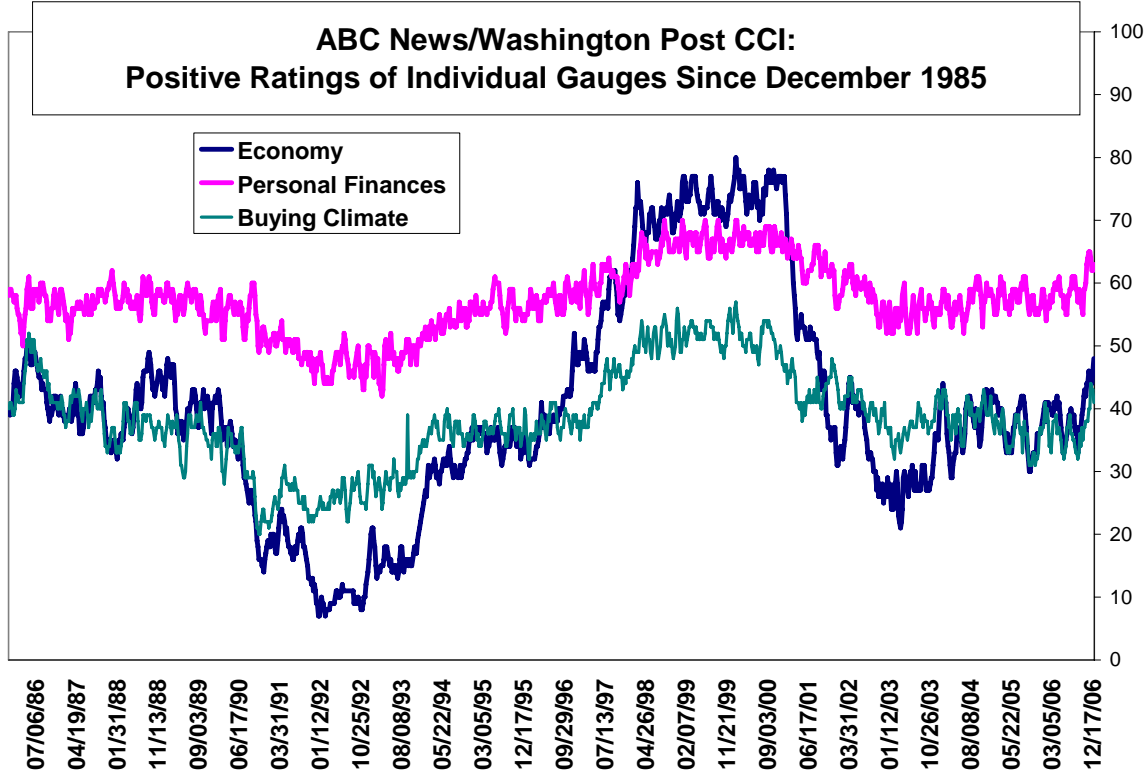
TREND – As noted, the index has averaged -10 so far this year, about its overall average, -9, in weekly polls since December 1985. Its best annual average was +29 in 2000; its worst, -44 in 1992. Its weekly high was +38 in January 2000; its low, -50 in February 1992.

ABC/Post CCI		
This week	+1	
2006 high	+1	Dec. 17, Dec. 10, Nov. 26, Nov. 12
2006 low	-19	Aug. 27, May 21
2006 average	-10	
2005 average	-13	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-9	



GROUPS – As usual, the index is higher in better-off groups. It's +40 among higher-income Americans while -33 among those with the lowest incomes, +16 among college graduates while -18 among people who haven't finished high school, +5 among whites while -42 among blacks and +13 among men while -10 among women.

At +15, the index remains strongest in the West, compared with -17 in the Northeast, -5 in the Midwest and +6 in the South. Huge partisan differences remain: The CCI is +45 among Republicans, but -14 among independents and -18 among Democrats.



Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Post CCI:

NATIONAL ECONOMY – Forty-eight percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good; it was 46 percent last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	48	6	42	52	35	17
Avg. since 12/85	40	4	37	60	40	20

PERSONAL FINANCES – Sixty-three percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 62 percent last week. The best was 70 percent on Aug. 30, 1998, matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	63	8	55	37	25	12
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

BUYING CLIMATE – Forty-one percent say it's an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 43 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	41	2	39	59	42	17
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	36	62	41	21

METHODOLOGY – Interviews for the ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index are reported in a four-week rolling average. This week's results are based on telephone interviews among a random national sample of 1,000 adults in the four weeks ending Dec. 17, 2006. The expectations question was asked of 500 respondents Dec. 6-17; that result has a 4.5-point margin of error. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The index is derived by subtracting the negative response to each index question from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Analysis by Dalia Sussman.

ABC News polls can be found online at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

12/17/06	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	1	1	0	-15	-11	1	-19	-10
State of Economy	-4	-8	-10	-26	-24	-4	-34	-21
Personal Finances	26	24	30	14	18	30	8	18
Buying Climate	-18	-14	-20	-32	-26	-12	-36	-27

OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	13	10	8	-6	-1	13	-12	1
Women	-10	-9	-7	-23	-20	-5	-32	-20
Age:								
18 - 34	1	5	2	-7	-11	6	-24	-6
35 - 44	3	1	8	-15	-11	8	-23	-9
45 - 54	-4	-7	-4	-25	-12	2	-30	-16
55 - 64	4	-3	-9	-20	-11	4	-25	-10
65+	0	3	-2	-15	-7	3	-31	-13
Income:								
Under \$15K	-33	-26	-58	-59	-62	-26	-72	-53
\$15K To \$24.9K	-38	-43	-21	-54	-34	-15	-62	-42

\$25K To \$39.9K	-12	-14	-3	-21	-41	0	-41	-18
\$40K To \$49.9K	-16	-18	-5	-16	10	26	-41	-10
Over \$50K	35	32	26	15	20	35	6	18
\$50K To \$74.9K	24	21	4	5	1	24	-20	2
\$75K To \$99.9K	44	32	20	21	25	44	7	19
Over \$100K	40	41	55	25	43	56	25	37
Region:								
Northeast	-17	-4	7	-28	-18	7	-30	-16
Midwest	-5	-13	-15	-28	-18	-4	-33	-16
South	6	1	0	-7	-10	6	-19	-10
West	15	16	10	-2	2	23	-13	1
Race:								
White	5	6	8	-11	-6	10	-12	-5
Black	-42	-50	-35	-41	-38	-27	-57	-43
Politics:								
Republican	45	36	40	27	36	45	12	30
Democrat	-18	-17	-19	-34	-33	-17	-46	-31
Independent	-14	-16	-6	-22	-28	-5	-28	-18
Education:								
< High School	-18	-25	-33	-47	-56	-18	-60	-39
High Sch. Grad.	-13	-8	-8	-20	-13	-6	-30	-18
College +	16	14	16	-2	3	18	-9	5
Home:								
Own	10	9	9	-10	2	10	-12	-3
Rent	-23	-20	-22	-29	-41	-16	-44	-30
Marital Status:								
Single	-14	-7	0	-15	-14	1	-32	-15
Married	16	10	8	-6	-3	16	-9	1
Sep/Wid/Div	-23	-19	-22	-38	-26	-19	-45	-32
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	13	7	10	-6	-1	13	-12	0
Part-Time	-1	5	1	-1	-15	13	-29	-11
Not Employed	-14	-11	-14	-29	-23	-11	-43	-24

1. Do you think the nation's economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

	Getting Better	Getting Worse	Staying the Same	No opinion
12/17/06	18	34	46	2
11/12/06	19	37	42	3
10/15/06	17	45	36	3
9/17/06	14	50	35	1
8/13/06	15	54	30	1
7/16/06	14	52	34	1
6/18/06	16	51	32	1
5/14/06	14	56	29	1
4/16/06	19	47	33	2

Call for full trend.

END